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# POST-OFFICES

COMPARED.

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TO THE  
COMMISSIONER OF THE  
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## BRITISH AND UNITED-STATES POST-OFFICES COMPARED.

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4,619,000,000 letters were sent through the English post-offices between 1839 and 1854 inclusive.

955,000,000 letters went through the United-States post-offices in the same sixteen years; an excess of nearly five to one against our post-office.

The gross receipts upon English letters were \$164,500,000; expenses, \$93,500,000; and the net revenue nearly \$71,000,000.

The total revenue and expenses in the United-States Post-Office were about the same; namely, \$82,000,000, except that government should have been charged some \$20,000,000 for government and congressional postage.

This shows the receipts of the English Post-Office were double that of the United States, while its cost was only \$11,500,000 more; also that it yielded a profit of \$71,000,000, while the United-States Post-Office has yielded no profit, except to do the government service free. What is the cause? The answer is this. The government of the English Post-Office *have furnished facilities to invite and to distribute mail matter, and this has brought both business and profit.*

The United-States Post-Office, having failed to do this, has, therefore, run behind.

### HOW CAN CHEAP POSTAGE BE MADE REMUNERATIVE?

This question was answered by Mr. Banning, postmaster of Liverpool, England, who had spent his life in the post-office, and his father before him. His evidence was this: "*A great many deliveries, facilities for sending letters, quickness of despatch, must be the best way of raising revenue.*"

The Commissioners-of-Revenue Inquiry, in England, used this language : —

“The facility of frequent, punctual, and quick communication, which the institution of the post-office was calculated to secure, may be justly classed among the *elements of profitable commerce*. It is essential to the purpose of government, and subservient to all the ends of national policy.”

Rowland Hill's first propositions were, “1st, Uniform and low rate; 2d, Increased speed in delivery; 3d, Greater facilities for their despatch; 4th, Simplifications in the operations in the post-office,” &c.

On these principles the system of cheap postage was established in England in 1839. An idea of its success can be gained from the tables which follow.

The London District Post comprises an area seventy-five miles in circuit, known as the Twelve-Mile Circle, — a radius of twelve miles from the General Post-Office.

Other cities are formed into free delivery districts.

The following table, prepared in 1854, explains itself: —

	Population.	No. of Letter Carriers.	No. of Receiving Houses.	Population to each Receiving House.	Collections from each Receiving House daily.	No. of Letter Deliveries in each Town daily.
London . . . .	2,362,236	1,385	498	4,743	2 to 11	3 to 10
Liverpool . . .	375,955	82	56	6,731	4	3
Glasgow . . . .	329,097	134	77	4,247	4 to 14	4
Manchester . .	316,213	123	107	2,955	1 to 5	4
Dublin . . . .	258,361	109	51	5,066	7	7
Edinburgh . . .	160,302	74	26	6,165	7 to 8	4
	3,802,164	1,907	815	4,665	1 to 11	3 to 10

Such are the accommodations. Now let us see the financial results, the *profits* of this great inland post, and *the extensive use the inhabitants make of its facilities*.

POST-OFFICES IN GREAT BRITAIN.  
STATISTICS OF 1854.

OFFICES.	Population.	Receipts.	Expenses.	Per Cent.	Number of Letters.	Receipts per 1,000 Persons.	Letters per 1,000 Persons.
London . . . .	2,362,236	\$6,111,531	\$1,078,290	18	103,377,728	\$2,587	45,876
Liverpool . . .	375,955	459,548	70,145	15	16,535,844	1,222	43,973
Manchester . .	316,213	373,682	63,285	17	18,238,116	1,182	57,715
Dublin . . . .	258,361	268,383	95,650	36	11,921,968	1,040	46,209
Edinburgh . . .	160,302	208,064	50,215	24	7,609,764	1,300	47,561
Bristol . . . .	137,228	147,399	30,790	21	7,928,232	1,076	57,870
Total, six cities,	3,610,395	\$7,568,607	\$1,388,915	18	165,611,652	\$2,096	45,876
Rest of Kingdom,	24,223,106	5,940,706	1,844,280	31	278,037,649	245	11,478
Entire Kingdom,	27,833,501	\$13,509,313	\$3,233,195	24	443,649,301	\$485	15,939

It will be seen from this table, that, although these six cities contained less than a seventh part of the population, the receipts were \$1,500,000 more than in the rest of the kingdom.

The number of letters per thousand persons in these six cities was 45,876, while in the rest of the kingdom it was but 11,478.

It is a striking fact that the receipts per thousand persons in the six cities were \$2,096, and in the rest of the kingdom but \$245; the reason being that nearly all of the large and costly letters circulate in the large cities. These very profits help to make postage cheap in the rural districts.

This letter delivery system of Great Britain in 1854 had the following, —

	Number.	Salaries.
Letter-receivers in the United Kingdom . . . .	4,280	\$236,742 00
Letter-carriers in cities and towns . . . .	4,395	804,515 00
Letter-carriers in rural districts . . . .	432	601,420 00
Total carriers and receivers . . . .	13,001	\$1,642,677 00



In 1873 the number of road letter-boxes was 9,000 ; in 1874, 9,700.

Whole number of "postal receptacles," 21,500, as compared with 15,200 ten years before. In 1874 the number was 22,000.

At nearly six hundred and sixty places free deliveries have been established for the first time ; and at more than nine hundred other places the deliveries have been extended in their area, or increased in number.

Number of letter-carriers in 1873, 16,072 [number in United States Post-Office in 1877, 2,265].

Arrangements are made for a very early collection of letters, so as to be sent in the earliest morning mails. In London alone half a million of letters and other packets are now thus collected weekly.

The "Controller of the Circulation" was sent over to Dublin to re-arrange their collection and delivery upon the London system.

In this way improvements and enlargement of facilities are constantly going on.

## POST-OFFICES IN THE UNITED STATES.

### STATISTICS OF 1854.

OFFICES.	Population.	Receipts.	Expenses.	Per Cent.	Number of Letters.	Receipts per 1,000 Persons.	Letters per 1,000 Persons.
New York . . .	515,547	\$619,143	\$130,175	21	15,396,955	\$1,200	29,879
Philadelphia . .	340,045	201,891	50,254	26	5,942,520	594	17,478
Baltimore . . .	169,054	136,581	35,023	25	2,173,171	808	12,859
Boston . . . .	136,375	194,943	54,779	29	5,592,888	1,423	40,824
New Orleans . .	116,375	96,309	34,031	35	2,288,100	830	19,725
Cincinnati . . .	115,436	85,423	27,121	32	2,432,846	743	21,155
Total, Six cities,	1,393,338	\$1,334,240	\$331,383	25	33,826,480	\$958	24,283
Rest of U. S. . .	21,798,538	4,921,296	2,218,187	54	85,807,938	226	3,936
	23,191,876	\$6,255,586	\$2,549,570	41	119,634,418	\$270	5,158

These six principal cities in the United States contain about one-sixteenth of the population, contribute about twenty-two per cent of the receipts, make about thirteen per cent of the expenses, and

furnish not quite one-third of the letters. They contribute 24,283 letters per thousand persons; and the rest of the United States but 3,963 per thousand persons. This shows, also, that the letters and profits thereon, which make cheap postage possible in the rural districts, as well as the cities, come from the literary, commercial, and manufacturing districts. These increased facilities in compact settlements, therefore, take nothing away from the sparse settlements, but earn profits to aid in increasing their facilities also.

## POST-OFFICES IN GREAT BRITAIN.

### STATISTICS OF 1854.

CITIES.	Letters in the Mails.	City Circulation, or Drop-Letters.	Gross Revenue from City Circulation.	Wages of Letter Carriers & Receivers.	Net Profit on City Circulation.
London . . . . .	57,186,159	46,191,569	\$1,385,747	\$761,510	\$824,037
Liverpool . . . . .	9,145,802	7,390,042	221,701	27,035	194,666
Manchester . . . . .	10,088,556	8,149,560	244,487	38,225	206,262
Dublin . . . . .	6,592,834	5,329,134	159,876	38,940	120,934
Edinburgh . . . . .	4,208,094	3,401,670	102,050	20,060	81,990
Bristol . . . . .	4,384,416	3,543,816	106,314	15,855	90,459
	91,605,861	74,005,791	\$2,220,173	\$701,825	\$1,518,348

This table of six principal English cities shows the letters in the mail as 91,500,000, and drop-letters, or city circulation, 74,000,000; making a total of 165,500,000. The gross revenue is over \$2,000,000; the expenses, \$701,825,—less than one-third; and the net profit on city circulation is \$1,818,348, or near seventy per cent of the receipts.

These tables were made some years since; but subsequent experience only confirms them.

In the postmaster-general's last report (p. 26) he speaks of Congress having settled, that regular legitimate periodicals "shall pass through the mails at privileged rates of postage; that is, *at less than the cost of transportation.*"

Can this be correct?

The lowest rates for newspapers and periodicals are two cents per

pound. This is at the rate of four dollars for two hundred pounds, and forty dollars per ton of two thousand pounds. Now, a barrel of flour can be transported to Europe (3,000 miles) for from fifty to eighty-seven cents, or for \$4.37 per ton, or about two mills per pound. The cost of transportation per ton to New Orleans (1,850 miles) is from two dollars and a half to four dollars per ton,—less than two mills per pound.

5 postal-cards weigh half an ounce. 160 postal-cards weigh a pound. This is \$1.60 postage for a pound. At this rate the postage on 200 pounds (weight of a barrel of flour) is \$320; a ton of 2,000 pounds, \$3,200.

Half-ounce letters at three cents each are ninety-six cents per pound; 200 pounds of them would be \$192. A ton of 2,000 of letters would be \$1,920.

The average of letters is one-fourth of an ounce or less. A ton of quarter-ounce letters would be \$3,840.

These facts will show where postal profits come from.

A thorough analysis by our most competent experts, giving all the elements of cost in moving freight on the Erie Canal, shows that it is less than one cent per ton per mile.

A similar analysis shows that on a railroad on a great thoroughfare, the cost of transportation may be made within five mills per ton per mile.

If, therefore, the government is paying the extravagant rates indicated for transportation, the facts should be known, and a remedy applied, *without putting the burden upon the diffusion of knowledge.*

Is it creditable to our national civilization, that, with several millions more of population than England, we should fall so far behind them in the means of diffusing social, moral, and commercial intelligence, which form the very foundations of our solidarity as a nation? Should the intelligence of our nation be satisfied with a system that distributes only some 400,000,000 of letters, postal-cards, and papers in one year, when the English office is circulating at the same time some 1,400,000,000, and clearing a net revenue therefrom, over expenses, of over \$13,700,000 per year?